THE WORLD.

NUMBER CLXXXI.

By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *June* the 17th, 1756.

IT has been remarked by certain wiſe philoſophers, that men are ſtrangely apt to err in their notions of good and evil, virtue and vice. They tell us that we have no adequate ideas of thoſe words, but are continually miſtaking and confounding them, calling good evil, and evil good, virtue vice, and vice virtue. One of theſe philoſophers has very lately diſcovered that the contentions, misfortunes and miſeries of mankind are wholly owing to government and laws, and that a ſtate of anarchy and confuſion, where the weak are at the mercy of the ſtrong, and the ſimple of the cunning, is the only ſtate of concord, ſecurity and happineſs.

ANOTHER

ANOTHER of theſe philoſophers, who ſeems rather enclined to new-model governments than totally to ſubvert them, has proved to the ſatisfaction of multitudes, that fraud, luxury, corruption, and all the catalogue of vices (as men are miſtakenly pleaſed to call them) are the only means to make a community great, flouriſhing and happy; and on the contrary, that frugality, temperance, continence and the like, which are vulgarly termed virtues, tend finally to it's deſtruction.

FOR my own part, I was not philoſopher enough in my youth to inveſtigate theſe deep truths; and now I am old, I find myſelf ſo bigotted to former opinions, as not eaſily to perceive that rapes, murders and adulteries are beneficial to ſociety, or that a ſtate of nature is better calculated for the preſervation of property, or the eaſe, peace and happineſs of mankind, than government and laws. But leſt it ſhould be ſaid of me, that from the peeviſhneſs and obſtinacy of age, I am ſhutting my eyes againſt the light, I will freely confeſs that I am lately become a convert to ſome other opinions, which I formerly held in equal diſeſteem. I had long accuſtomed myſelf to look on Gaming as a vice; and as ſuch I have frequently treated it in the courſe of theſe papers: but I am now fully convinced of my error, and that I ought to have conſidered it as a national virtue, and productive of more advantages to ſociety than any other whatſoever. That my readers may entertain the ſame opinion, I ſhall here preſent them with a letter which I have lately received from a very ingenious corre pondent, whoſe reaſoning upon this ſubject is too concluſive to be oppoſed.

To

To Mr. FITZ-ADAM,

SIR,

I HOPE you will not think it inconſiſtent with the manner in which you have propoſed to conduct your paper, to lay before the public the complaints of your correſpondents, relating to that part of the world you more immediately preſide over; eſpecially as you have declared your deſign to interpoſe, whenever the critical emergencies of your country ſhall require your aſſiſtance.

YOU, who are acquainted with public proceedings, muſt have taken notice of the additional taxes that have been lately laid upon cards and dice; by which it is juſtly apprehended, that the profits ariſing from the honourable occupations dependent thereon, will be greatly impeded. Whatever ſatisfaction gloomy and ſplenetic minds (always diſpoſed to anticipate the ruin of the kingdom) may expreſs, I aſſure you I cannot help conſidering this affair with the moſt painful concern; and I doubt not my reaſons will be equally convincing to you.

AT a time when the perfidious enemies of our country have rendered all foreign trade precarious and uncertain, to what happier reſources can we fly than the commerce of game? By what means is the circulation of money, the life and ſpirit of trade, more ſpeedily promoted? What other buſineſs can boaſt of ſuch large returns? and (with honour be it mentioned) what debts in any other kind of commerce are more punctually diſcharged?

diſcharged? How ſtrongly do the various fluctuations of fortune inculcate fortitude, courage, reſignation, and a noble contempt of death! virtues, for which the proficients in this ſcience have been greatly renowned. What better method could be found out for humbling the grandeur, and diminiſhing the over grown revenues of our nobility and gentry, than by blending their manners and their fortunes with the loweſt of their fellow creatures? Nor is it the leaſt praiſe of this profeſſion, that the fair ſex are qualified to make a figure in it, and to exert thoſe ſtriking talents which we ſeem ſo ſolicitous to exclude from many of the arts of life. By a conſtant application to gaming, they gradually wear off the killing brightneſs of thoſe eyes, and the overpowering ſplendour of thoſe charms, which would otherwiſe be deſtructive to many thouſands of mankind. Hence they are taught kindneſs and condeſcenſion, and rendered graciouſly acceſſible to the company and careſſes of every adoring ſwain. I might obſerve farther, that while the merchant and tradeſman are contracting a narrow avaricious turn of mind, a haughty contempt, and a ſupercilious air, the gallant ſpirits who have eſpouſed this genteel commerce, acquire an engaging freedom of converſation, a boundleſs generoſity of nature, and an inimitable politeneſs of manners.

If the political advantages of gaming are demanded of me, I anſwer, that it ſecures our money in the kingdom, and keeps it in perpetual circulation. Can there be a more convincing demonſtration of the dangerous conſequences of foreign trade, than that the riches of the kingdom are exhauſted by it, and the national current

rent wealth, according to the opinion of ſome wiſe calculators, reduced from forty millions to twelve? not to mention the importation of the various follies, faſhions and poiſons, which expoſe, infatuate and deſtroy ſo many of our deluded countrymen. Can any other argument be neceſſary to procure an unlimited indulgence to a commerce, from whence ſo many advantages ſpring, and which is ſo evidently conducive to the public good?

If it ſhould be objected, that many perſons of plentiful incomes are reduced to poverty by gaming, I ſhould be glad to know what employments in life are totally exempted from misfortune, and how many bankrupts are recorded in our public chronicles, who deſpairing to riſe in the world by the vulgar method of trade, have had recourſe to this genteel profeſſion, and quickly retrieved their fortunes.

It would be eaſy to mention many more circumſtances in praiſe of ſo noble a commerce, if it was in the leaſt neceſſary: I doubt not the concurrence of all men of genius and ſpirit in theſe my ſentiments; and I hope the legiſlature will henceforward look with favour on an art, in which the politeneſs, the morals, the conſtitution and the riches of this kingdom are ſo greatly concerned; and inſtead of diſcouraging it with ſevere taxes, and heavy burthens, will contribute every thing to it's advancement. To this end I cannot preſent you with a better propoſal, than "that all thoſe who can "bring ſufficient proof of their having loſt from one "thouſand to one hundred thouſand pounds, ſhall be "maintained at the public expence, and rewarded for "their patriotiſm, in ſacrificing their fortunes ſo diſ-"intereſtedly for the good of their country."